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Chairman:	Mr. MONGBE	(Benin)
later:	Mr. ARRELLANO (Vice-Chairman)	(Mexico)
later:	Mr. MONGBE (Chairman)	(Benin)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 96: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/48/182, A/48/338, A/48/359, A/48/430 and Add.1, A/48/492; A/48/484-S/26552; A/C.2/48/3, A/C.2/48/4)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. VALENZUELA (Honduras), speaking on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Honduras, said that the six countries firmly supported the International Conference on Population and Development which was to be held in Cairo in September 1994 and would consider such important issues as rapid population growth and its consequences, the rights of women and children, AIDS, ageing, immigration, poverty and unemployment, and environmental degradation.

2. As members of the Group of 77, the countries of Central America supported the statement issued by the Group's ministers for foreign affairs at the end of their seventeenth meeting in which they had reaffirmed the importance of the link between population and development and called on the international community to support social development programmes designed to improve the quality of life.

3. According to the Human Development Report 1993 published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 90 per cent of the world's population was virtually excluded from participation in the political, economic, social and cultural activities which determined their everyday living conditions. The resources of the richest countries should be distributed more fairly in order to enable the poorest peoples to participate in development. At the same time, efforts must be made at the national level to reduce birth rates in the regions where population was growing fastest. The eradication of absolute poverty and the improvement of health and education services and the status of women would help to slow down and balance population growth. In that connection, attention should be paid to the State of World Population Report 1993 which requested countries to take immediate and decisive action to achieve a balance between population, consumption and development.

4. Latin America was going through a period of demographic transition marked by changes in its mortality and fertility rates and in its growth rates. But the trends were not uniform in all the countries of the region. In the 1950s the fertility rate had been six children per woman on average, but now it was only 3.5 in the 1990s. However, the average in Central America was five children per woman and even eight or higher in some rural areas. In the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean the rural exodus had been so rapid that the proportion of urban dwellers in their population was now the highest in the world - an average of 70 per cent of the total population.

5. Despite a reduction in population growth and an improvement in basic services, the profound economic crisis in the region in the 1980s had had a serious impact on social programmes and therefore on their beneficiaries as well. Although the economic situation of most of the countries was improving in the 1990s, the development programmes would have to be given a human dimension

(Mr. Valenzuela, Honduras)

by redirecting them towards the social sector in order to improve inter alia the situation of the most disadvantaged groups. According to estimates of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), there were at present 200 million people in the region living in poverty, i.e. about 50 per cent of the population, and they were concentrated in urban areas. Thus, although the social and economic conditions in the region had undergone a relative improvement since the crisis, the living conditions of the population had deteriorated. There was no doubt that economic growth, tax reforms, an improved system of tax collection, the reduction of military budgets, administrative reforms and the receipt of development funds would equip the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with the necessary means to build up their social programmes.

6. It was a matter for concern that despite the excellence of its work the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which had received financial support from the European Community and the Nordic countries in particular, did not have sufficient resources to implement the many planned programmes in almost 140 countries. The international community must therefore increase its support of the Fund. It was to be hoped that UNFPA would thus be able to continue to provide the financial and technical services which countries needed in order to maintain sustainable development.

7. Mrs. SYLVESTER (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the countries members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the CARICOM countries endorsed the emphasis given by the Secretary-General in document A/48/430 to the central importance of the human being in all questions of population and development and the need for population policies and programmes to be based on the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and couples. The Secretary-General had also reaffirmed the right of couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, as stated in the World Population Plan of Action, and he had emphasized that family planning services should be voluntary, accessible, acceptable and affordable in order to promote maternal and child health.

8. The countries members of CARICOM shared the view of the Preparatory Committee that the empowerment of women was an essential factor in achieving population objectives, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and that women's participation at all levels of policy-making should be increased. There was also an inextricable linkage between population, environment and development. However, the small island and coastal countries of CARICOM had particular population needs which would require a subregional approach. The socio-economic statistics indicating that some of them enjoyed a relatively high level of prosperity were misleading. In fact, their capacity to generate self-sustaining economic growth was dependent on regional integration and intraregional and extraregional trade.

9. The high rate of adolescent fertility had serious implications for the health, education and employment opportunities of young mothers. AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases were increasing in the subregion and imposing a burden on society. In addition to causing a shortage of qualified personnel, emigration also had demographic consequences. Those difficulties and the other problems affecting human resources development were exacerbated by structural

(Mrs. Sylvester, Antigua and Barbuda)

adjustment policies and an external trade environment which had a detrimental effect on the standard of living. Furthermore, the widespread poverty, which had increased in the 1980s, had resulted in a decline in personal incomes, particularly among the poorest people, and had forced Governments to use a part of their scarce resources to erect safety nets to help the disadvantaged groups.

10. The countries members of CARICOM, in collaboration with UNFPA and various non-governmental organizations, had begun to address their problems. For example, family planning programmes had led to reductions in population growth rates and wider use of contraceptives. Through its regional office in Jamaica UNFPA had implemented a number of regional programmes designed to incorporate sex education and preparation for family life in the school curriculum; it helped to fund clinics dealing with adolescent needs and supported the training of nurses, midwives and medical personnel. Many UNFPA-supported projects had AIDS-education components and were designed to encourage responsible sexual behaviour. UNFPA must urgently increase its assistance to the CARICOM countries because of their unique population problems. They would also welcome an increase in the number of advisers assigned to the UNFPA country support team based in Santiago, Chile, and thought that some of them should be seconded to CARICOM.

11. Using resources allocated by the UNFPA Trust Fund for the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, national committees on population had been established to coordinate preparatory activities for the Conference. In that context, a preparatory meeting of regional government experts on population and development in Latin America and the Caribbean had been held in Saint Lucia in October 1993 under the auspices of ECLAC, UNFPA and the Latin American Demographic Centre in order to forge a collective strategy on population and related issues.

12. The Cairo Conference would present the international community with an excellent opportunity to implement the quantitative goals on population within the proposed time-frame of 20 years. The goals should take regional and national variations into account. However, if they were to be achieved in the desired time-frame, additional financial resources would be required and adequate provisions would be needed for the follow-up to commitments to be made at the Conference, including mechanisms for review and appraisal. Furthermore, the issues and recommendations of the final Conference document should be forward-looking, operational and pragmatic.

13. Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka) said that the population explosion was a grave problem that impeded the achievement of sustainable development. Population concerns must be at the centre of action on economic, social and environmental issues; they no longer could be sidelined in the development debate. In that regard, the Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Bali in September 1992 had decided to convene a ministerial meeting to strengthen cooperation between those countries on population issues.

14. In that regard, it was of vital importance to focus efforts on human resources development by paying particular attention to health, education, employment and gender issues, as well as to population distribution and international and national migration, all questions which were critical aspects

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

of the development process. Youth was the most dynamic sector of any society. In his country youth accounted for a high percentage of the population, and the Prime Minister had proposed at the meeting of the heads of Government of Commonwealth countries in Cyprus that a world summit on youth should be convened. The participants had adopted the proposal.

15. The Cairo Conference also should consider issues relating to resource mobilization and allocation, the role of Governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as international cooperation. It was to be hoped that the Conference would emphasize the social, cultural and economic aspects of population problems and propose specific measures on those matters. High-level political commitments were needed in that regard. South-South cooperation in that field would promote political commitment on the part of Governments of the developing countries and enhance the competence of national bodies through technical cooperation.

16. The meeting of the group of experts on population of the non-aligned countries held recently in Bali had identified various modalities for cooperation among those countries on population issues. Those modalities, which should be implemented at the subregional, regional and international levels, defined important strategies which the Conference could develop to address population problems during the coming decade.

17. His Government took an active interest in population management and human resources development; it had implemented an integrated programme which had yielded remarkable results. His country's social indicators were among the best in the world: a literacy rate of 90 per cent, a life expectancy of 72 years, a birth rate of 20 per thousand inhabitants and an infant mortality rate of 90 per thousand live births; that was all the more remarkable in a country with a relatively low per capita income (470 dollars). However, those achievements could be sustained only if the necessary resources were available to the country on a continuing basis. Low-income countries that had achieved a satisfactory level of human resources development should continue to be provided with assistance until self-reliance was achieved. The international community therefore should continue to support those countries in order to enable them to consolidate their achievements with respect to population and development. His delegation also welcomed the efforts made by UNFPA to prepare for the Conference and believed that the annotated outline of the final document provided an excellent starting point.

18. Mrs. TOMKINSON (Australia) said that the key issues which her country would like to see addressed at the Cairo Conference were the linkages between environmental degradation, population distribution and poverty, issues relating to the status of women and indigenous people, population movements, reproductive rights, health and mortality and population ageing. The question of the relationships between environment, population and poverty was complex and incorporated many factors, inter alia, consumption patterns, changes in technology, population distribution and urbanization. The interaction between those issues required increased attention. The principles of sustainable development required the integration of environmental and population considerations into all aspects of decision-making.

(Mrs. Tomkinson, Australia)

19. In view of the linkages between the advancement of women and economic and social development, the discussion of women's issues should not be confined to chapter IV of the annotated outline of the final document; while improvements in the status of women were important in their own right, they also had a substantial positive impact on family health, fertility and, indirectly, the environment.

20. The proposed universal declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People rightly demonstrated the increasing prominence of those issues in the international community; the preparatory process for the Conference therefore should place greater emphasis on them. Although population movements of an unprecedented scale were largely voluntary and controlled by Governments, irregular migrations posed a serious problem; durable solutions to the problem of refugees must be found, the best of which would be repatriation in dignity and safety.

21. The development of family planning services should be based on the principles of social justice and on a firm commitment to freedom of choice in the use of such services. Family planning information was crucial. The idea of exerting population "control" should be abandoned; population targets were inappropriate since they led to the adoption of coercion in family planning programmes.

22. Her country had reservations about setting unrealistic financial targets for donors with respect to population activities. It would do its best to reach the target recommended by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) of 4 per cent of official development assistance for that purpose by the year 2000.

23. In regard to the actual structure of the draft final document, she commented that Part Two, "Choices and responsibilities", gave a greater place to the basis for action than to the action itself, an imbalance which should be corrected. The distinction between national and international responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations was not made clear. Part Three of the text, on means of implementation, required further work, in particular on capacity building and national and international implementation.

24. In Australia, the preparations for the Cairo Conference were being overseen by a national committee which was conducting community consultations on the basis of the draft national report on population. The final national report would be made available to the Conference secretariat in the near future.

25. Mr. Arrellano (Mexico), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

26. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) said that he was pleased that the annotated outline of the final document reaffirmed the importance of the individual and of his or her choice and behaviour in its consideration of demographic balance, sustainable development and international migration. It was essential to respond to the individual's needs for economic and social development and to ensure informed choice, especially in regard to family planning.

(Mr. Baillargeon, Canada)

27. Though there could be some value in setting 20-year goals, it must be recognized that praiseworthy goals did not necessarily translate into worthwhile programmes. Goals could not be imposed from outside: they must correspond to specific national realities and be acknowledged both by Governments and their peoples. Realizing those aspirations would necessarily involve action in different sectors across a series of programmes and policies. If the Cairo Conference helped countries to identify the appropriate blend of policies and programmes that needed to be adopted to accelerate progress towards those goals, significant progress would have been made.

28. On the question of partnership, the participation of representatives of civil society in the preparations for the Conference had enriched the debate considerably and was a source of satisfaction. Continued efforts in that direction should be encouraged, not only in the period leading up to the Cairo Conference but beyond. Since individuals were at the heart of demographic and development concerns, civil society, in its broadest sense, must be involved in the achievement of goals in that respect.

29. He supported the thrust of the chapter in the annotated outline on reproductive rights, reproductive health and family planning. The Canadian Government, fully aware of the importance of the question, had recently organized a round table at Ottawa which had produced some excellent recommendations that the secretariat might wish to incorporate in the chapter. The recommendations drawing attention to unsafe abortion as a major public health concern merited particularly careful attention.

30. On international migration, the Preparatory Committee secretariat had succeeded in reflecting in an able and sensitive manner the consensus reached at the Committee's second session. The annotated outline contained the necessary elements for drafting recommendations that would capture key priorities in that regard, including the need to adopt strategies capable of ensuring sustained and sustainable development leading to the better management of international migration, the need to ensure that migration benefited both sending and receiving countries, the need to address the causes of refugee movements, and lastly, the need to protect the right of asylum. In that connection, it would be useful to list the relevant existing international instruments in the chapter on principles.

31. The chapter of the annotated outline on follow-up would need to be clearly formulated. The recommendations should not be too many or too complex, since it was essential for all citizens to be active in working towards the realization of the intentions expressed. Since the Cairo Conference would not be able to address all the issues falling under the heading of population, arrangements should be made for the other conferences scheduled to be held subsequently by the United Nations, in particular the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to carry on the work begun. An integrated approach would be needed to build on the achievements of the Cairo Conference. To that end, categories of goals should be established, so as to separate those issues that directly affected fertility levels from those that had broader social implications. The Canadian Government supported the proposal of the Secretary-General of the Conference to hold informal meetings on various topics

(Mr. Baillargeon, Canada)

in the next few months, including the questions of goals, principles and follow-up.

32. The second section of the chapter of the annotated outline on follow-up was more difficult to comment on because of the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat. The restructuring under way could offer an excellent opportunity to deal more effectively with population challenges. Thought should be given to ways of harnessing the components of the United Nations system to promote the realization of the goals set at Cairo.

33. Mr. SOEGARDA (Indonesia) said that the issue of population was inextricably linked with the issue of development. It had become obvious that, in order to achieve sustainable development, the primary focus must be on people. Development programmes should therefore be people- and family-centred and population issues given due consideration, as had long been the case in Indonesia. In that connection, he was pleased to note that the Conference had attributed due importance to that linkage, in adopting as its overall theme "population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development". For that reason, the annotated outline of the final document should give greater emphasis to the relationship between development and population. One question that could be considered together with population was poverty alleviation; the concept of development was broadening and nowadays covered such issues as environment and fundamental human rights, particularly the right to social development.

34. Another important consideration that should be taken into account concerned differences in the level of social, economic and cultural development in the various countries. Although each country had the right to evolve its own development and population programmes, the improvement of the human condition in general demanded international cooperation and solidarity. The international community should not confine itself to mobilizing resources to implement the programmes in question. It should also contribute to capacity-building, promote research and the transfer of technologies related to population, and increase national awareness of the linkage between population issues and sustainable development.

35. Human resources development should become part and parcel of population policies. To meet the needs of present and future generations, it was important to promote education and training, expand employment opportunities, eradicate illiteracy and poverty and improve human settlements and systems of health care since sustainable development could only be achieved by a healthy population freed from poverty.

36. For population policies and programmes to succeed, community participation, including the participation of women and non-governmental organizations, must be enhanced. A more effective partnership was needed between Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in order to develop population-related technologies and disseminate information on population questions. Greater emphasis should therefore be placed in the document on the need for increased awareness of population issues at the local, national, regional and international levels.

(Mr. Soegarda, Indonesia)

37. With regard to capacity-building, his delegation subscribed to the principle that, as indicated in the annotated outline, the fundamental purpose of mechanisms for the attainment of population goals was the generation of the capacity for countries to undertake programmes of action to further their own national development and improve the quality of life of their people. Strengthening of national capacity should therefore be a priority activity.

38. It was of particular importance that the commitments to be undertaken at the Cairo Conference should be translated into practical and realistic programmes. Thus, in each chapter, the wording "selected topics for recommendations" should be replaced by "implementable activities". Moreover, at the second session of the Preparatory Committee, it had been suggested that the Conference should adopt a set of quantitative goals to be achieved by all countries over the next 20 years. In order for countries to be able to attain those goals, they should be set in a realistic and flexible manner, and should not constitute an attempt to impose a rigid formula. His delegation looked forward to a discussion on the issue.

39. Indonesia, which had been privileged to have hosted the Fourth Asian and Pacific Population Conference (one of the five regional preparatory meetings for the Cairo Conference), would be hosting the forthcoming ministerial meeting on population of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. His Government trusted that that meeting would be able to contribute valuable inputs to the International Conference process. It also hoped that the outcome of the meeting could be taken into consideration in the preparation of the final document of the Conference.

40. Mr. SINGH (Fiji) said that despite the wide differences in their social, economic and political conditions, as well as cultural and religious values, countries in the South Pacific shared many common concerns in regard to population and development. Those concerns were reflected in the Port Vila Declaration on Population and Sustainable Development, to which his delegation fully subscribed.

41. The different chapters of the annotated outline of the final document were addressed in the Port Vila Declaration as a reflection of the region's position with regard to the various conceptual issues, as well as the region's aspirations for the Cairo Conference. All the regional organizations of the South Pacific would be working closely together to ensure that their common position was fully reflected in the final document.

42. Fiji had submitted its national report on population to the Conference secretariat. That report reflected clearly the many population and development problems with which his country must deal within the context of its own social, cultural and economic priorities.

43. The high population growth of the mid-1970s had put increasing pressure on Fiji's scarce resources, and the increasing number of young people entering the job market meant that more employment opportunities had to be created and more resources allocated to job training. The emigration of skilled workers to the more developed Pacific Rim countries further aggravated the situation. A small

(Mr. Singh, Fiji)

island nation such as Fiji could not sustain a large population growth which was incompatible with sustained improvements in the standard of living. Government policies therefore recognized two broad development goals relating to population. The first was to maintain a population growth rate below 2 per cent per year through an integrated approach to family planning. The family planning programme was implemented by the Ministry of Health with the assistance of non-governmental organizations providing information dissemination, education and communication programmes. A programme to raise the status of women through education and modern-sector employment opportunities was also being pursued. Action in that area would also have beneficial consequences in other sectors, such as improved family health and a rise in the age at marriage, which could help significantly to lower fertility rates. The second goal was to equip the population with employment-related skills through a comprehensive programme of school reform at all levels.

44. In his view, the annotated outline of the final document was a useful text which would help delegations focus on the central purpose of the Conference. His delegation attached special importance to the following points: promotion of sustained economic growth that would simultaneously address population growth, alleviation of poverty and reduction of social inequality; formulation of measures to promote greater harmony among population, resources, environment and development; integration of women in population programmes and in decision-making; recognition of the distinct perspective of indigenous people on aspects of population and development; improvement of access to family-planning services and to primary health care; cooperation of countries of origin and countries of destination on international migration; training of personnel for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of population programmes; setting up of new guidelines to satisfy the growing resource requirements of population programmes; and putting in place of appropriate mechanisms for assessing progress made in achieving the objectives of the action programme to be adopted by the Cairo Conference.

45. His country was committed to addressing population and development issues in an integrated manner and to promoting the attainment of the objectives of the Cairo Conference. The enormous efforts that had been expended in preparations for the Conference should ensure its success, and it was to be hoped that the plan of action that would be adopted would assist all countries in addressing their population problems and in accelerating the social and economic well-being of their peoples.

46. Mr. OLISEMEKA (Nigeria), commenting briefly on the annotated outline of the final document of the Conference (A/48/430/Add.1), said that the outline was crucial, although still preliminary, and that in order to be relevant, the final document must be detailed, realistic, pragmatic and implementable. The process of preparing it should keep sterile debates on principles to a minium and concentrate instead on concrete measures and specific actions that would be required, on a global level, to resolve the issues of population, economic growth and sustainable development.

47. The 1994 Conference must build upon knowledge accumulated during the last decades on population trends and patterns, and attempt to resolve the systemic problems that they engendered; thus, the policies applied must be closely

(Mr. Olisemeka, Nigeria)

interrelated. The first part of the annotated outline (preamble and principles) appeared to be adequate and reflected the major global concerns on population and sustainable development. Emphasis should be placed, however, on the linkage between poverty reduction and structural adjustment programmes, as well as between rural development and sustained economic growth. The delegations at the second session of the Preparatory Committee had, in fact, held the view that population, environment and development were inextricably linked. A population programme must therefore integrate all development issues, thus helping to reduce poverty.

48. With regard to national activities, he said that his country had created a population commission several years earlier. That commission was responsible for designing population programmes, conducting censuses and keeping data on population issues. It had recently been strengthened and modernized, as attested to by the success of the last national census. The commission, in conjunction with other governmental agencies, in particular the Ministry of Health, had embarked on a campaign to disseminate information in the rural areas with a view to providing education on population matters and on patterns of sustainable development.

49. All ramifications of the issue of resource allocation, dealt with in chapter XIV of the annotated outline, should be addressed, while the issue of international cooperation reflected in chapter XV should be further strengthened. More attention should also be focused on the establishment of a follow-up mechanism. Policies should not necessarily dwell on macroanalysis but should address the specific aspects of the relevant population groups - especially the rural population that had been fully acknowledged in the annotated outline.

50. Mr. MUTHANA (Yemen) said that population questions represented a formidable challenge and had ramifications which extended into all domains. Many problems were encountered in that field, in both developed countries and developing countries. Rapid population increase had negative and far-reaching consequences at the economic, social and ecological levels. Societies were endeavouring, taking into account their culture, their values and their traditions, to achieve economic and social development within a just, equitable and democratic framework which respected the freedom and the rights of the individual and which would permit him to take his place in society.

51. Like the other developing countries, Yemen encountered serious difficulties as regards population and development, and was trying to devote its limited resources to priority programmes aimed at addressing the essential needs of its population, considering the individual as the pivot, the creator and the beneficiary of development. A national population council had been established and its secretariat monitored the implementation of the population of policies and programmes outlined in the national strategy and plan of action regarding population. That body had organized numerous nation-wide activities relating to the Cairo Conference. Regarding practical measures and implementation plans, 1993 had been marked by the finalization of the integration process announced on 22 May 1990, with the organization of the first free and democratic elections, which had led to the setting up of the first democratically elected government. The policies of Yemen with regard to population had been outlined in 1991. It

(Mr. Muthana, Yemen)

was true that efforts had been made previously. However, it had been thought at the time that the problems regarding population would automatically disappear once the development goals had been reached. Currently, development activities encompassed population issues.

52. Numerous activities were under way in preparation for the Cairo Conference, not only at the government level but also by non-governmental organizations, which played an important role in that field.

53. His delegation was convinced that the International Conference on Population and Development, which was a follow-up to the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, would be in the peoples' interest.

54. Mr. KHANAL (Nepal) said that the linkage between population and development had long been understood but not well appreciated. The United Nations World Population Conference in 1974 had clearly spelled out the interrelationship between population and socio-economic development. Subsequently, however, particularly at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, population issues had not been given the importance they deserved, and even Agenda 21 dealt with those questions only schematically. The upcoming International Conference on Population and Development, to be held 20 years after the Bucharest Conference, was therefore the last call to the global community to compensate for lost opportunities and to outline a clear, specific and integrated plan of action. Past experience, technological innovations, progress made in literacy programmes and communications, backed up by additional resources available, after the end of the cold war, should greatly enhance capacity and effectiveness in dealing with population issues.

55. The newly elected democratic Government formed by the Nepali Congkos was fully appreciative of the population issues facing the nation. The eighth five-year plan formulated population policies and the Government had already taken measures to coordinate the activities of the various ministries.

56. The second meeting of the Preparatory Committee had helped Member States, coordinators and experts to bring into clearer focus the relationship between population and development and particularly the linkage of population with other development imperatives such as conservation of the environment and human resources development.

57. The proposed preamble for the final document was satisfactory, emphasizing the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries. However, his delegation was of the view that equal emphasis should be placed on capacity-building and international cooperation. An optimum balance should be found between the reproductive rights of individuals and the need to contain ever-increasing population growth. Population education played a vital role in the decision-making process of each individual, and that important concept could not be simply brushed aside. The very survival of human beings and the environment in the future depended on both a pragmatic short-term and long-term plan of action, the success of which hinged on population education.

58. The least developed and other developing countries needed additional financial resources with matching technology in order to combat the root cause

(Mr. Khanal, Nepal)

of all problems emanating from abject poverty. As long as that kind of poverty persisted, all national and international measures of population planning, human resources development and sustainable development would not be as effective as had been intended. The ever-widening gap between rich and poor could not deter the world community from its collective resolve to seek ways and means for the betterment of mankind. The upcoming Ministerial Meeting on Population and Development of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 relating to the issue and the Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries with regard to population were ample testimony to the total and collective commitment of the developing countries. What was needed was a proper assessment of population-related problems and their impact on development, environment and other social problems, and appropriate measures to obtain a balance between population, environment and development. The International Conference on Population and Development was without doubt the best place for such action.

59. Mrs. DOWSETT (New Zealand) said that, with less than 10 months remaining before the Cairo Conference, the current debate provided the opportunity to briefly reflect on the ground that had been covered and the direction to be taken. There was a solid foundation to build on and it was encouraging to see that a debate had begun on the means by which individuals and communities could contribute to the achievement of a sustainable balance between human numbers and needs and the resources of the planet.

60. The South Pacific region was considering the problems of population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development in a truly integrated way. The Port Vila Declaration, introduced the previous day on behalf of the South Pacific countries, had already provided the catalyst for the debate in that region. However, a number of issues still needed to be addressed. The Secretary-General of the Conference had made the point that the real value of the outline lay in the attention it drew to the enormity of the Cairo meeting's mandate. It was necessary therefore, as she observed, not to lose sight of the objectives concerning population: it was not a question of a rerun of Agenda 21.

61. The annotated outline was slightly unwieldy. It should be made less repetitious and more action-oriented. It would be necessary to find the right balance between principles, sectoral and cross-sectoral issues in order to ensure the internal consistency of the document. Women's concerns and gender considerations needed to be explicitly recognized in the principles. The principles section would also need to include references to the status and concerns of indigenous people and the importance of education for women. Attention should be paid to linkages between the different sections of the final document and references to financing and to technology transfer should be woven into Part Two, in order to avoid "telescoping" between Parts Two and Three.

62. The contribution that the Cairo Conference could make to international development would very much depend on the usefulness and relevance of the final document. The recommendations should not be peremptory. Instead, some reflection on promoting a whole series of activities was necessary; likewise, the institutional follow-up to the Conference should be given careful

(Mrs. Dowsett, New Zealand)

consideration. There was no need to create new structures, but rather a need to define more clearly the roles of the United Nations Population Fund, the Population Commission, the Commission on Sustainable Development and other United Nations bodies implementing and monitoring the results of the Conference in the United Nations development system.

63. On the whole, the annotated outline took account of the need to adopt an approach which recognized the uniqueness, real problems and needs of individuals. The Conference secretariat deserved praise for the work it had done on ageing and migration, and the emphasis given to the non-governmental and voluntary sectors as agents for change from the grass-roots level. Ensuring that women could make choices about their own lives was the basis for any action on population and development, for history showed that fertility rates declined when women had access to birth control. It would be interesting to see which activities would be proposed to secure their participation at all stages in the decision-making process. It was an issue which had all too often been neglected in discussions on fertility. The final document must also take up the issue of men's responsibility in such matters as fertility, disease transmission and the well-being of their partners and children. Lastly, the final document must unequivocally assign priority to universal literacy and education for women and girls at all levels. Chapter III contained references to consumption, but that aspect should be expanded upon. For instance, the section on population and the environment linked environmental degradation and demographic variables without acknowledging the impact of those factors on consumption patterns. The chapter on reproductive rights, reproductive health and family planning would be essential to the Conference. However, the issue of abortion was barely touched upon. It should not be overlooked, if the intention was to adopt an integrated approach to population and development problems. Lastly, greater mention should be made of indigenous populations in the final document, particularly in the section on population and the environment, since such communities played a vital role in environmental management and development on account of their knowledge and traditional practices. The final Cairo document must address the concerns of that important population group.

64. Mr. Mongbe (Benin), Chairman, resumed the Chair.

65. Mr. SIEBER (Observer for Switzerland) said that he had provided the secretariat with a detailed report setting forth his delegation's comments on the annotated outline for the final document of the Cairo Conference. Switzerland attached great importance to the success of the International Conference on Population and Development. The final document should not merely be action-oriented with a comprehensive approach to population issues, but should also include follow-up measures; such measures must be realizable and relevant to sustainable human development, must take account of the skills and experience available in public and non-governmental bodies and make the most of international efforts under way, such as the World Social Summit, the World Conference on Women and the preparation of an Agenda for Development.

66. The final document of the Cairo Conference should contain a concise preamble and a statement of principles; furthermore, chapter II must be expanded upon. He had noted with interest the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General of the Conference on setting targets for the following 20 years on

(Mr. Sieber, Observer, Switzerland)

infant mortality, the health of mothers and children, access to information on family planning services and primary education for all children. They should reinforce the social fabric which was indispensable for sustainable human development.

67. The question of financing had also been mentioned. Details of the anticipated costs should be provided. In order to ensure the successful implementation of population policies, strengthen the relevant administrative structures and upgrade family planning services, national resources should be supplemented by additional funding.

68. He welcomed the fact that the Preparatory Committee had become a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, in accordance with the decision of the Economic and Social Council. He was also in favour of extending the duration of the third session of the Preparatory Committee by one week and allowing two extra days for consultations prior to the Conference. So far the preparations for the Conference were progressing smoothly and Cairo should pave the way for a more socially just and predictable future.

69. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) expressed alarm at the recent trends of population growth in the developing countries. In the least developed countries it was obvious that while mortality rates were falling, they were still high, while fertility rates remained at very high levels. The result was that the population of those countries was growing fast. The consequences of the phenomenon on economic development were manifold and entailed, inter alia, a concentration of workers in marginal, low-productivity activities and wider disparity in income levels, as well as an increase in the demand for food and agricultural products. In response to the demand, many countries had overexploited their resources, accelerating the pace of deforestation, desertification and soil degradation.

70. The authorities in Bangladesh attached high priority to lowering the population growth rate and improving the economic conditions of the masses. They were striving to include family planning in their nation-building activities and to guarantee access to health care for mothers and children.

71. The Cairo Conference would be an appropriate forum for considering issues relating to population growth and general socio-economic development. It could provide a framework for promoting concerted efforts to implement policies and programmes for reversing current demographic trends.

72. Bangladesh was of the opinion that the final document should contain specific recommendations aimed at breaking the vicious circle of high population growth rates and poverty. It should also specify measures to improve the situation of women and young girls, above all through education, and highlight the importance of training greater numbers of staff in order to ensure proper implementation of population policies and programmes. Another matter to which urgent attention should be given was the improvement of demographic data bases in developing countries.

73. The success of population programmes and policies in those countries would depend to a great extent on generous foreign aid; hence the need to improve the

(Mr. Khan, Bangladesh)

chapter on international cooperation. The final document must set forth concrete and realistic measures for the rapid and full implementation of its recommendations.

74. Mr. KOZIY (Ukraine) said that the human factor must play a key role in the issues of population, economic growth and sustainable development. In his view it was essential that the Preparatory Committee should focus on those specific objectives from the outset of its work. A plan had already been adopted for the final document, which should take into account the interests of all groups of countries.

75. The recommendations to be issued at the Conference should be forward-looking, functional and pragmatic. In that connection, the objectives to be set for maternal, infant and child mortality, life expectancy, education, in particular for women and young girls, sexual equality and family planning should be realistic and take account of the socio-demographic situation in the different regions of the world.

76. The final document should constitute an action plan for future activities in matters of population. The Conference must also organize its work with due regard for the different international instruments adopted on the subject, in particular the Bucharest World Population Plan of Action, the recommendations of the International Conference on Population held at Mexico City in 1984 and the Amsterdam and Rio de Janeiro Declarations. The final document must also accurately reflect the results of the different regional conferences on population, in particular those of the European Conference.

77. The outcome of the Cairo Conference should have universal application and, at the same time, take into account regional diversity and country-specific conditions. In that connection, it was unfortunate that population issues in the Central and Eastern European countries had not been duly taken into consideration in the preparatory work for the Conference. The complex demographic and social problems confronting those countries were very different from those facing the more developed European countries.

78. In Ukraine, for example, the demographic situation was alarming; the population was declining at an ever faster rate and at the same time qualitative indicators were deteriorating: life expectancy was falling, mortality rates were higher than birth rates and morbidity rates were increasing. That deterioration of demographic indicators was attributable to socio-economic difficulties and was linked to the serious consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. At the same time, Ukraine did not have the necessary financial and material resources to implement an active population policy. It must therefore count on the support of the international community in that area.

79. The National Population Committee established in preparation for the Cairo Conference had already completed its report on the demographic situation and policy of Ukraine in the 1980s and early 1990s. His delegation hoped the document would be a valuable contribution to the work of the Preparatory Committee. His Government supported the efforts of the National Committee which would probably end up laying the groundwork for Ukraine's population policy.

(Mr. Koziy, Ukraine)

Within that framework it also planned to organize a scientific conference on the demographic situation of Ukraine, whose conclusions would be submitted to the Preparatory Committee.

80. Ukraine, for its part, was prepared to participate actively in the practical preparations for the Cairo Conference and in the elaboration of documents for it and hoped that the Second Committee's consideration of the question would expedite the preparatory process.

81. Mr. AL-DOSARI (Bahrain) stressed that the problems posed by rapid population growth and population distribution were the chief obstacles to development. In that context, the Cairo Conference was extremely important for the formulation of population policies and programmes aimed at establishing sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

82. It was disturbing to see that it was becoming increasingly difficult to ensure lasting improvement of people's quality of life. Poverty must therefore be reduced in order to meet the basic needs of populations and elaborate development policies and programmes that incorporated population elements. Similarly, development strategies must take environmental issues into account.

83. Concerning family planning, he said that policies and programmes for the protection of the family must be accompanied by an educational campaign to show how the goals set were consistent with the goals of all societies and did not destroy the family unit. While the family, as the basic unit of society, was given priority in social plans, support must be provided to educational services in the areas of safe motherhood, food and prenatal care in order to reduce the maternal mortality rate.

84. The Cairo Conference would help to strengthen international communication and it was to be hoped that it would institute the necessary mechanisms to help Governments implement the action programme it would adopt. All countries were free to implement whatever population policies they wished, in line with their culture, values and traditions, and taking into account their own specific socio-economic and political conditions.

85. Mr. UNNIKRISHNAN (India) recalled that, within the context of follow-up activities to the recommendations made at earlier conferences on population and poverty eradication, considerable efforts had been made to reduce fertility and infant mortality rates.

86. The developing countries, which accounted for more than 90 per cent of the current growth in population, were having to cope with growing development needs, and the conditionalities imposed on development assistance by certain developed countries, further complicated their task. His delegation remained optimistic, however, and hoped that, by combining their efforts, the rich and poor countries could attain their common goal, namely to guarantee a socially just and equitable quality of life to their people.

87. Poverty was currently the most urgent issue before the international community; it held the key to solving the others. Poverty alleviation should therefore be at the top of the agenda in international population, development

(Mr. Unnikrishnan, India)

and environmental policies. A high population growth rate was usually an indicator of poverty rather than the cause of it. Thus, in taking up that challenge, it would be important to find developmental paths which were not only environmentally sustainable but, more importantly, socially just and culturally acceptable. Poverty was generally linked to environmental degradation, as the have-nots were forced to exploit environmental resources in order to survive. The international community must seek to harness the vast latent resources of the developing countries in order to impart a sustainable dynamism to the world economy. For that reason, the developing countries considered the right to development as a fundamental right.

88. All countries recognized that environmentally sound development must be pursued but they often differed on how to achieve it. In that context, and in order to avoid duplication of efforts, the Cairo Conference should not consider issues such as those relating to the environment, which were undoubtedly important but were being discussed in other forums, and focus its attention on the central theme of population and development. Any population programmes or policies proposed should also take into account the country-specific conditions.

89. There was also a close interrelationship between poverty and unemployment programmes with regard to the alleviation of rural poverty, the reduction of disparities between rural and urban indicators and the crucial importance of maternal and child health care services. Efforts must also be made to strengthen community participation in family planning programmes, bolstered by the introduction of widely accessible medical facilities.

90. In that context, priority must be accorded to combating illiteracy and social backwardness in order to reduce the fertility and infant mortality rates. Women must be informed for they must know that they had the right to control their own fertility. Safe motherhood and child care were also essential. It was to be hoped that the Cairo Conference would strengthen measures to control sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

91. There must be a national consensus on the population programmes implemented in each country and all segments of society must participate in them.

92. Concerning the framework for the final document of the Conference, he congratulated the secretariat of the Preparatory Committee on its synthesis of the many recommendations put forward by delegations at its second session. While recognizing that the document was still in the drafting stage, he noted with concern that too much attention seemed to be focused on issues other than population issues. The Cairo meeting should not become an umbrella conference which incorporated elements already agreed on in other international forums or took up issues that would be dealt with at other conferences. Population issues must be considered as an essential element of a development strategy.

93. The Conference should focus on poverty alleviation and those issues relating to women which were directly related to population. It should deal with training women for self-employment as well as male responsibility and participation. The needs of adolescents, the integration of AIDS prevention with family planning and mother and child health care should also receive special attention. It was important to promote community participation and the

(Mr. Unnikrishnan, India)

creation of public awareness through information, education and communication. Although the role played by NGOs in that area was to be welcomed, those organizations could not be placed on the same level as member States and Governments, which should play a preponderant role in the deliberations leading to the Conference.

94. The issue of international support to population and development was of special importance in the present international economic situation. With the weakening of the multilateral trading system, the role of development assistance and investment flows took on increased importance.

95. In the annotated plan for the final document, some principles relating to population and development were highlighted in a way which might be inappropriate, as sound arguments could be advanced to include other principles. To focus on principles might detract from formulating a programme of action. His delegation could support a preamble incorporating important existing international agreements but felt that identifying principles at the present stage might be arbitrary and counter-productive.

96. The Indian Government was in the process of finalizing its national report, which would comment more specifically on the preparations for the Conference and it would spare no effort to ensure the success of that important meeting. It would support unreservedly a document for the third session of the Preparatory Committee which would incorporate its concerns in a spirit of consensus.

97. Mr. ENVERGA (Philippines) said that his Government had integrated population issues into its development programmes and had taken urgent steps to confront those issues. Specifically, it had adopted a development programme with definite demographic dimensions, stressing sustainable growth, poverty alleviation, generation of productive employment activities, reduction of socio-economic inequalities and attainment of social justice, and emphasizing people empowerment as the key element in the improvement of the quality of life.

98. President Ramos had recently launched a family-planning programme based on freedom of choice, the welfare of children and families and sustainable development. In accordance with its first principle, families had access to information on family planning so that they could make informed decisions on the basis of their aspirations, religious beliefs, moral convictions and economic situation. In promoting its programme, the Government's tool was persuasion not compulsion. It was also necessary to ensure the welfare of children and families; to that end what was required was to improve the living conditions and health of mothers and children living in poverty. The Government was committed to helping families to help themselves by providing them with family planning information and services. The programme involved a partnership between government agencies and non-governmental organizations, private sector groups, the commercial sector and religious groups.

99. Family planning was not, however, a panacea for poverty and underdevelopment; it must be matched by other programmes designed to increase wealth and distribute it more equitably under a national policy of development. Given the importance his Government attached to population concerns in the context of development, his delegation was committed to participating actively

(Mr. Enverga, Philippines)

in the Cairo Conference and hoped that a new consensus document on the full integration of population programmes into economic and social activities and sustainable development would be adopted.

100. His Government had also integrated the issue of human rights, including reproductive rights, into its population policies and programmes, one of the elements proposed by the Secretary-General of the Conference for the draft recommendations of the ICPB. It supported the adoption of comprehensive planning strategies focusing on human rights, population and environment linkages, gender relationships, responsible reproductive behaviour, reproductive health and sexuality. Coercion must be rejected as a policy to implement any and all programmes because it was a breach of human rights. Women and children were the most vulnerable segments of society and deserved the Government's protection.

101. Another issue which would be addressed by the Conference was that of migration. That issue was of great concern to the Philippines because, being an archipelago, it had a long history of internal and external migration. Migration affected the economy and development of the sending and the host countries. The potential of return migration as a channel for the transfer of technology and know-how to the migrants' countries of origin should be fully utilized.

102. Mr. HALLOWAY (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that UNIDO attached great importance to the Cairo Conference. Chapter III of the annotated plan highlighted the close interrelationship between population resources, the environment and development and identified poverty as a key challenge to development because of its association with illiteracy, malnutrition, disease and failure to recognize the importance of the status of women, all of which contributed directly to rapid population growth. It was therefore necessary to give absolute priority to the fight against poverty, employment creation and the improvement of health, education and housing and economic opportunities for women. It was in that spirit that UNIDO had reordered its priorities and given greater attention to the fight against poverty in its reform and revitalization programme. One of its objectives was equitable development through industrial development in terms of creating employment and expanding the productive base for the supply of essential goods. It was generally recognized that the gradual transformation of an agrarian society into an industrial economy and the subsequent increase in productivity were important mechanisms for combating poverty. The measures called for were developing industrial entrepreneurship, increasing the participation of women in industry, creating industry-related employment opportunities in poverty-stricken regions, decentralizing industrial development, promoting small and medium enterprises and developing rural industries.

103. He then cited several examples of activities carried out by UNIDO to develop small-scale industries in developing countries in Africa, Central America and Asia.

104. Two other key objectives of UNIDO were particularly relevant to the issues of population and development: the development of human resources for industry and environmentally sustainable industrial development. Central to UNIDO's

(Mr. Halloway, UNIDO)

concerns was the creation and continuous upgrading of the skills, know-how and motivation of workers required by industry. The importance of skilled human resources was borne out by the new patterns of industrial development and competition. The ability of a country to upgrade and reconvert industry-related skills was a major instrument in combating unemployment, promoting technological innovation and raising industrial productivity. UNIDO was also committed to preserving the environment by promoting energy-efficient and environmentally friendly industrial production and processes.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.